The University of Chicago

SOME RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF PRAGMATISM

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
JOSEPH ROY GEIGER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Two things there are, said Kant, which are worthy of man's reverence, "the starry heavens above and the moral law within." This outburst of scientific enthusiasm and moral fervor may be fairly said to epitomize the spirit and the motif of modern philosophy. Whenever and wherever our modern life has presented its problems or vouchsafed its satisfactions one or the other, or both, of these interests have been implicated. And philosophic thought has taken its cues accordingly. Not every thinker has been as catholic in his interests as was Kant. To some the "starry heavens above" have seemed all-important, while to others the "moral law within" has made the strongest appeal. But few thinkers, no matter how great their bias in one direction, have been insensible to the problems lying in the other direction. And the profoundest systems of philosophy have come from those men who, like Kant, have been concerned with both the natural and the spiritual, the real and the ideal, the "is" and the "ought," have felt these to be incompatible and have sought to penetrate to some deeper principle of unity.

This more fundamental principle of unity, however, has not been forthcoming. Spinoza's "God or Nature," Kant's "Thing in Itself," Hegel's "Absolute," and Spencer's "Unknowable"—all are but grim testimonies of the persistence of the problem. It is as urgent today as it was in an earlier and more metaphysical age. To be sure, we have become suspicious of the possibility or the worth of "ultimate" principles and impatient with any philosophy which attempts to formulate such principles. With the development of scientific methods, our practical problems have so multiplied and our immediate experience has become so engaging as to leave us little time or inclination for the consideration of problems of a more strictly philosophic character. Furthermore, as knowledge has become more and more specialized, a sort of division of labor has served to isolate the various fields of human interests and activities, and to obscure the fact of their connections. But, while this specialization of knowledge has its advantages, it likewise has its dangers. The quality of the work done by the particular sciences is apt to be impaired by too rigid an isolation of their respective fields. Life itself is not made up of clearly marked off fields of interest and activities.

Its areas overlap. Of course, it is profitable for certain purposes and within certain limits to treat some particular group of phenomena without regard to the relation of these to other phenomena. But the reason for this relative isolation of various groups of phenomena are precisely those which look toward the enrichment of life and toward establishing and maintaining its organic character. To the extent that specialization furthers these ends it is legitimate. But there is no practical or scientific virtue in mere specialization of knowledge and isolation of the sciences, as such. The very considerations which demand a division of labor among the sciences likewise demand a more general science or discipline whose task it is to serve as a sort of clearing house for the adjustment of conflicts arising out of such an artificial way of conceiving life. "Every science," says Professor Dewey, "in its final standpoint and working aims is controlled by conditions lying outside of itself—conditions which subsist in the practical life of the time."[1] But the conditions with reference to which the standpoint and working aims of a given science are to be determined must themselves be criticized and evaluated from the point of view of other and broader areas of experience. Such a criticism and evaluation can be accomplished only by the sort of discipline indicated above. This discipline, to be sure, cannot be a science of "first principles" in any ultimate or metaphysical sense. It will not have access to realms of reality inaccessible to the particular sciences. It must rely on the general method of procedure employed by the particular sciences. That is to say, it must proceed by means of hypothesis and experimentation. But it will construct hypotheses which are relevant to its own data and problems and execute its experiments accordingly.

And thus, in spite of the fact that the aims and the methods of modern science would seem to leave no place for a philosophic discipline—indeed, *because* of this very fact, the demand for just such a discipline is the most persistent and most vital scientific problem of our day. In the words of a contemporary writer, "the demand (for a synthesis of experience) remains, and with every new discovery of science, every advance in the ideals of art and of the conduct of life, every development in religious faiths, comes anew the task of philosophy—to criticize and through criticism, to make a fresh attempt to interpret, from the unity of reason, the manifold of life."[2]

[1] John Dewey, "Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality," *Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago*, III.

[2] J. H. Tufts, *The Teleology of Kant*, p. 48.

Now, the most notable instance, perhaps, of the need of this type of philosophic criticism and interpretation is in connection with the "conflict" between theology and the natural sciences. Facts could be cited to show that our modern life has suffered immeasurably by reason of the ambiguity and confusion growing out of this "conflict." The natural sciences and theology do not, as is commonly held, occupy independent and isolated spheres. The areas of experience with which they are concerned overlap. They have common interests. The relative and abstract concepts with which they severally operate are not adequate to serve as "cosmic principles," or even to provide the foundations of "independent" systems of knowledge. Both theology and the sciences are confronted with problems for the solution of which they must look beyond their own immediate data. This means that for the purposes of these problems the categories which they respectively employ need themselves to be made the objects of scientific scrutiny—to be criticized and interpreted from the point of view of other areas of experience. But there has been too little of this sort of thing. On the one hand, theology, relying upon a supernatural revelation or upon an equally supernatural reason, has dogmatically asserted its self-sufficiency and has persistently ignored the facts of science. On the other hand, science, having paid so dearly for its emancipation from theological prejudice, has come to doubt that "any good thing can come out of Nazareth." It has usually explained religious phenomena by explaining them away. It has measured the truth of religious ideas by showing that these ideas cannot be true.

Now this dilemma of a theology which is not scientific enough and a science with little or no appreciation of the religious point of view is a constant challenge to any way of thinking which presumes to effect by criticism and interpretation a greater unity within the several areas of experience. This study is undertaken from the point of view of the urgency of this challenge. It is concerned with the religious problem as it has come to be formulated in the history of modern thought. It is proposed to examine this problem in the light of its historical background, and more particularly, to determine what implications there are for an adequate treatment of it from the point of view of the current philosophical movement known as "pragmatism."

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM IN ITS HISTORICAL SETTING

The religious problem as it has persisted in modern philosophy is but a part of the more general problem of epistemology. The epistemological point of view is the philosophic articulation of the difficulties incident to the breakdown of the doctrine of supernatural revelation. These difficulties were at first essentially theological. Mediaeval theology was the foundation of the entire social and political superstructure comprising the secular world of the Middle Ages. It acquired the prestige and power essential to such a position through its doctrines of supernatural revelation and divine authority. And the historical reasons for the development of these doctrines are obvious. In the first place, the Church was the source of all learning and culture throughout the "Dark Ages." It was the school wherein the western races, but lately emerged from barbarism, learned the lessons of self-control and self-direction. To meet the demands made upon it, the Church needed to be sure of itself; it must speak in no uncertain terms; its utterances must be authoritative. To this end it assimilated the doctrines of Hebrew religion, the ideas of Greek philosophy and art, and the principles of Roman law, formulated these into an elaborate system of dogmas and constructed thereon a theory of the world. No method was at hand for criticizing and interpreting these elements of culture, inherited from the past, in the light of present conditions and needs. The prophetic insight of the Hebrew seers, the speculative and creative genius of the Greek philosophers and artists, the practical wisdom of the Roman jurists—these belonged to a day that was dead. The best that moral earnestness, unillumined by native genius and untaught by personal experience, could do was to fall back on the ideas and institutions of an earlier and wiser age and stamp these with the authority of a divine revelation.

But the urgency of the immediately practical situation was not the only motive for the dogmatism of mediaeval theology. Its ultimate concern was, not to provide the foundations of the world that now is, but rather to point the way to the world that is to be. It was not so much concerned with establishing and maintaining the natural order as with mediating to immortal souls the reality of the supernatural order.

Thus the religious object at this time was the supernatural or the trans-experiential order as over against the natural order as given in everyday experience. The religious object, however, was not always so conceived. An empirical study of the origin and development of religions serves to eliminate certain intellectualistic presuppositions as to the essential character of the religious interest. In particular, it appears that the effort to describe primitive religions as involving a more or less conscious attitude of worship toward supernatural beings or deities, or as involving a more or less conscious sense of communion with a supernatural order, is based on a false analogy growing out of an inadequate psychological analysis. A more adequate analysis from the point of view of functional psychology shows that primitive religion so far from being essentially intellectualistic, or so far from involving supernatural factors, was bound up with the vital life-giving, life-preserving activities of the social group, and was in reality the expression of the group's attitude toward these activities. The origin of religion is to be sought in the origin of the social consciousness. "The religious consciousness is to be identified with the consciousness of the greatest values of life. . . . . This sense of value is the feeling of the worth of life which expresses itself in the demand for self-preservation."[1] Whatever objects preserve and promote life, such as sources of food supply, means of social organization, and the like, come to have religious significance and finally get themselves accepted and worshiped as deities. But these deities are not necessarily supernatural. They simply represent the highest social values. And this conception of the divine as the embodiment of the highest social values persists throughout the history of religions. This accounts for its constantly changing content. For example, in the earlier periods of Hebrew history, the divine was identified with certain forms of animal life which happened to be the chief source of food supply. Later on when the tribes united to form one social and political organization, the maintenance of the integrity of this organization against the trickery and the treachery of hostile groups came to be the matter of supreme concern, whereupon the divine was conceived after the fashion of a mighty monarch, whose function it was to preserve the social and political integrity of his people. With the downfall of the nation and the collapse of the existing social order, new values were conceived and embodied in the person of Yahweh. These new values were partly ethical. Yahweh could no longer be a tribal or national god and retain the respect of his defeated and disheartened people. He must henceforth

[1] E. S. Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 168.

be international. His interests must be world-wide. He could not be concerned with the destiny of nations as such, but only with the manner in which nations work out his righteous will and thereby serve the ends of truth and justice. But this high-water mark in Hebrew religion was reached by only a few of its prophets and seers. The rank and file of the people continued to look forward to the restoration of their historical kingdom, in a natural way, until events had gone so far and their political situation had become so desperate that there could no longer be any hope of a natural restoration. Then began the apocalyptic movement in Hebrew religion. Yahweh was now thought of, indeed, as a world-god; but he was, nevertheless, supposed to be concerned with the fortunes of a "chosen" people. In the "fulness of time" he would terminate the present order of things by a cataclysmic exercise of his power and usher in a new dispensation in the interest of his followers.

The religious object thus assumes for the Hebrews an essentially supernatural character. It was to be profoundly modified, however, by its contact with Greek metaphysics. Not long after the final downfall of the Hebrew nation Greek society and civilization underwent a similar disintegration. As a counterpart to the supernatural god and supernatural world conceived by the Hebrews, as compensatory ideas, the Greeks developed, on an immeasurably higher level of culture and with thorough philosophical sophistication, the concepts of a metaphysically ultimate principle and of a realm of Perfect Being. Now in the first centuries after Christ, when Christianity was finding it necessary to formulate itself into a body of doctrines, both these concepts, namely, the Hebrew "supernatural" and the Greek metaphysical ultimate, were taken over and utilized. When they were finally assimilated by Christian theology, they came to stand for two definitely recognized traits or aspects of the Divine Being, namely his personal, political, anthropomorphic activities and his super-personal, rational, metaphysically ultimate signification. In the hands of Saint Thomas Aquinas, these concepts were made to yield their full implications for the position and the power of the Church. According to Saint Thomas there are to be distinguished three realms of knowledge. The first of these is the realm of reason, the second the realm of revelation, and the third the realm of beatific vision or mystical insight. As to the first of these, it was held that reason is a competent and legitimate method of knowledge in the world of physical nature. By studying nature the reason will be inevitably led to the notion of a divine intelligence—the metaphysical ultimate of the Greeks. But a study of nature under the laws of reason will never

yield any vital or personal knowledge of God. For example, reason will never discover that God is a Trinity, or that he has vouchsafed to redeem the world through the death of his Son and the divinely appointed ordinances of the Church. These and other personal attitudes and activities he chooses to acquaint man with independent of man's reason; and this he does through revelation. The third kind of knowledge, that of beatific vision, is reserved for the saints and mystics in this life and for all the faithful in the life to come.

Thus mediaeval theology was concerned with just those attributes of the divine nature which were admittedly inaccessible to the reason. Hence the doctrines of a revealed truth and of divine authority. Now with the breakdown of these doctrines at the time of the Renaissance religious philosophy fell back upon the "inner light" of the individual and by means of rational speculation rehabilitated theology. But as soon as philosophy had time to criticize the work of its hands, it discovered that its God was not the finite, personal God of the Hebrews and of traditional theology, but rather the metaphysical ultimate of the Greeks. This discovery was made in connection with the elimination of miracles. Man's reason demanded a perfect God, but a perfect God would not need to resort to miracles to carry on the world-order. If a perfect God made the world, the world must of necessity be the "best of all possible worlds." And there was obviously no occasion, in such a world, for a personal, finite God.

But even the metaphysical God of deism and natural religion was soon to be called in question. It was John Locke who took the first step in this direction. When he declared that prior to all metaphysical speculation an inquiry should be made into the nature, limits, and worth of human knowledge, he set in motion a movement of epistemological criticism, culminating in the philosophy of Hume and Kant, which put an end once for all to the theological pretensions of dogmatic rationalism.

The critical philosophy of Hume and Kant stimulated the most fruitful period of modern philosophy. The tendencies growing directly out of the penetrating criticisms and the profoundly constructive suggestions of these two systems fixed the main outlines of philosophic thought throughout the nineteenth century and down to our own time. It was in connection with these tendencies that the religious problem assumed its most crucial form. We must indicate in a word what these tendencies were.

In the first place there was a reaction against all theological pretensions of philosophy and an emotional and pietistic reinstatement of

orthodox doctrines, including those of revelation and authority. This movement assumed a vigorous and aggressive form and enjoyed an extensive following during the first half of the century. After that it was forced to make a number of far-reaching concessions to science and to critical thought in general, so that today it can hardly be said to be holding its own. As a counterpart of the revival of orthodox theology there was a feeling of scientific emancipation from any sort of obligation on the part of philosophy to theology. This new sense of scientific freedom and intellectual daring came to be generalized into such philosophic tendencies or movements as the materialism or "mechanism" of C. Vogt and L. Büchner; the positivism of Auguste Comte and J. S. Mill; the mystical agnosticism of Herbert Spencer; and the evolutionistic monism of Haeckel and Ostwald. All these movements are generally characterized by the one term, naturalism. A third tendency, one having its roots in the transcendental idealism of Kant, and known as the "new" or "objective" idealism, reached its climax in the system of Hegel. During the last two or three decades this movement has been given new life and vigor in England and America in the writings of such men as the Cairds, T. H. Green, Bradley, Bosanquet, and Royce. A fourth tendency was an attempt to develop the implications of the Kantian dualism and thus to conceive reality from two perfectly independent points of view, namely, from the point of view of the theoretical reason and the practical reason, or moral intuition, respectively. The most influential exponents of this type of doctrine are the theologian, Ritschl, and the spiritualistic idealist, Rudolph Eucken. Finally, there are two contemporary movements which have their roots partly in the voluntaristic tendencies in the philosophy of Kant, but chiefly in the more general movements of which the Kantian philosophy was but one expression. These are the creative evolution of Henri Bergson and the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey. Both of these movements represent a reaction against intellectualism. But whereas the former urges its criticisms in behalf of certain ultimate metaphysical interests, the latter is concerned all the while with the practical interests constituted by immediate experience.

Now it is with this last-named movement, namely, pragmatism, that we are concerned in the study which we propose to undertake. All the other types of doctrine indicated are implicated in the religious problem, to be sure, and any adequate treatment of the problem must take some account of them. We shall find it necessary, however, to restrict our consideration of their bearing upon our problem to the fact

that they have fixed the form in which the problem presents itself. More particularly, these types of doctrine have approached the religious problem with certain presuppositions which predetermined the form in which the problem must be recognized and treated. These presuppositions have as a rule been concerned with epistemological and metaphysical considerations and have posed the question of the nature of religious reality, the possibility of religious knowledge, and the truth of religious ideas. The limits of our study will not permit an exposition of the actual historical movements tending to fix the religious problem in these forms. And, as a matter of fact, the purposes of our study do not require it. It is sufficient to note that the sort of study we propose to make must face the type of questions indicated above and must be prepared to examine and criticize the metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions lying back of them.

CHAPTER III

THE PRAGMATIC DOCTRINES OF REALITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND TRUTH

We come, then, to the consideration of the pragmatic point of view: what are its implications for the religious problem? The religious problem in its historical form, as we have seen, concerns the reality of the religious object, the possibility of religious knowledge, and the truth of religious ideas. Now it is obvious that the competency of any philosophical system or point of view to deal with the problem in this form in any adequate way depends for the most part on its conception of reality, its theory of knowledge, and its criterion of truth. Traditional philosophies might be shown to be wanting in the matter of their religious implications at one or the other or all of these points. And if pragmatism is to prove more fruitful or more suggestive for the interpretation of religious realities and for the criticism and evaluation of religious knowledge and truth, this must be by reason of its general doctrines concerning reality, knowledge, and truth.

What, then, in the first place is its general doctrine concerning reality? What is its conception of the real? To begin with, it must be said that pragmatism has no doctrine of reality, i.e., ultimate reality, or reality at large. It conceives the real in wholly empirical terms. It knows nothing of a transcendental reality, whether in the form of the hypothetical entities of natural science, or in the form of trans-experiential "things-in-themselves." It insists that whatever reality there is must be constituted by experience. And by "experience," pragmatism does not mean the piecemeal, chopped-up, done-with affair conceived by traditional empiricism and accepted by rationalism as a true account of what experience is. When it identifies reality with experience, it proposes to take experience radically, i.e., just as it is, in all its immediacy and with all its multitude of diverse interests. It would attribute reality to permanence as well as to change, to product as well as to process, to relations as well as to terms, to continuity and organization as well as to discontinuity and flux. Conceived thus, experience is its own excuse for existing. It has its own values. It sets its own problems. It exhibits its own realities. And these empirical realities are not to be construed as being in any sense the manifestations or

appearances of a more fundamental order of existence, or as posing a problem of ultimate reality.

Pragmatism, then, has no theory of reality at large. Its fundamental postulate is that things *are* what they are experienced as—that a thing's reality consists in its being experienced as this, that, or the other.[1] The doctrine that things are what they are experienced as is not, however, to be identified with the fundamental presupposition of idealism, namely, that the reality of things consists in their being *known*. For knowing is only one among a number of equally natural modes of experiencing.

> To assume that because from the standpoint of the knowledge experience, things are what they are known to be, therefore metaphysically, absolutely without qualification, everything in its reality (as distinct from its appearance or phenomenal occurrence) is what a knower would find it to be, is, from the immediatist's standpoint, if not the root of all philosophic evil, at least one of its main roots. For this leaves out of account what the knowledge standpoint is itself experienced as.[2]

Metaphysically, knowing is no more real than any other mode of experience; and metaphysically, reality is no more constituted by the knowing process than it is by any other process within experience. Pure or immediate experience, to be sure, has its cognitive aspects. But these aspects as being cognitive do not fix the character of other aspects as being real. They have no inherently distinctive character elevating them to a higher plane of reality. They are only things or events like other experienced things or events, which, for the time being, and within the limits of a given situation, have acquired significance and value by reason of their being capable of standing for or referring to certain other items of experience. So that their function is not that of mediating a knowledge of realities which would otherwise remain outside of experience, or of representing existences which get their status in reality by thus being known. Their function is rather that of serving as instrumentalities for referring to and anticipating, and thereby controlling, future experience.

But the identification of reality with experience implies in the next place that it is dynamic. It is all the while moving, changing, growing. It exhibits spontaneity and novelty. Its future is undetermined. It is still in the making. It is not the absolute flux of Heraclitus, to be

[1] Dewey, *Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays*, p. 227.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 229–30.

sure. It has its continuities, its stable areas, its finished aspects. But these do not make reality any the less dynamic. They do not have their being apart from the process in which they were produced. They are not out of the running. They are functions within the process. They are the connecting links between the old and the new—the means of controlling and directing the future course of events. Only a non-empirical empiricism or a transcendental idealism could miss the moving, changing, growing character of reality. Only a rationalism, hardened to the desperate urgency of immediate experience, having no regard for the practical issues of life, could overlook the fact that reality is not in a state of equilibrium; that it is divided against itself, has its tensions and conflicts; and that in readjusting itself at these points, it is acquiring new momentum, giving itself new directions, effecting new realities. In a world like this, equilibrium is the one thing impossible. There is an ever recurrent conflict of tendencies. The course of things is constantly meeting with obstacles, constantly being turned aside. And these obstacles and conflicts furnish the conditions of change and development; they are the occasion of readjustment and expansion.

Reality, then, for pragmatism is empirical; it is dynamic; and finally, it is practical. In calling reality "practical" the pragmatist means to assert that man's interests and needs, his endeavors and achievements, are all implicated in its structure and in its development. Experience as the general mode of reality has, as we have seen, its tensions and conflicts which prove to be the occasions of readjustment and expansion. But these are not tensions and conflicts in general. They are tensions and conflicts for someone at sometime. They constitute specific situations. They imply the interaction of an organism with certain other natural energies within an environing medium.[1] Their issue involves some participation on the part of the organism in the course of things. If this participation is by way of direct response, if it is a matter of blind submission, of brute acquiescence, the issue may be said to have been mechanically determined. In that case reality has readjusted itself, but not freely and prosperously. But the participation of the organism in the course of things may be indirect. Its response may be suspended. The light of previous experience may be brought to bear on the present situation, making it possible to anticipate future consequences. If this be the case, the stimulus finally reacted to will not be the brute fact of immediate experience, but this fact plus its anticipated consequences. Participation will thus be intelligent, free,

[1] Dewey, *Creative Intelligence*, p. 11.

prosperous. It will be a matter of controlling the course of things, giving them direction and fixing their character as being good or bad.[1]

In conceiving reality to be practical in the sense that human needs and aspirations and efforts are implicated in its structure and development, pragmatism is but applying in a thorough going way the principle insisted upon long ago by Kant.[2] The world, said Kant, grows up—comes to be—within our experience. We help to make it. By the operation of the laws of thought upon the raw material of sensation we construct the only reality we know anything about. Furthermore, the dominating principle of this creative process, the interest which is always present guiding and determining the constructive operations of thought, is that of unity, that is, continuity and adjustment. It is true Kant thinks of these constructive principles of thought as having their origin apart from the only function they can possibly perform, namely, the organization of experience. And he likewise thinks of the end or the ideal with reference to which the categories operate as having its origin and sanction outside of experience and yet as making certain demands upon thought in relation to experience. In these matters the pragmatist has left Kant behind. He sees in the shift which Kant is forced to make from a transcendental to a functional use of the categories of thought, from a constitutive to a regulative use of the ideas of reason, further evidence of the practical character of reality. The organizing functions of experience and the ideal and hypothetical principles or ends, on the presupposition of which these functions operate, are themselves practical. They have their roots in experience. They have formed themselves in the presence of and in contact with the subject-matter which furnishes the occasions for their operations; have wrought themselves out under the stress of human needs and wants and purposes.

So much for pragmatism's doctrine concerning reality. How about its theory of knowledge and its criterion of truth? It is obvious that with the conception of reality which has been indicated above, it must have a radically different view of the function of knowledge and of the nature of truth from those held in traditional circles. More particularly, knowledge cannot be regarded as an "external relation" existing between the organism and its environment. Nor can it be regarded as an act whereby the mind of a knower becomes aware of an external and given world. Nor, once more, can it be thought of as a process of constructing and sustaining in ideal form the whole of reality as it may present itself in momentary sensation. For pragmatism, the antitheses implied in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 22. [2] Witter, *Pragmatic Elements in Kant*, pp. 16–17.

such statements of the knowledge process simply do not exist except at the problematic moment when, by reason of the tension and conflict, reality loses for the time being its immediate character and passes into certain mediate phases, that is, assumes certain cognitive aspects. At such a time, and with reference to the problem presented, the immediacy of experience breaks up into a subject-object relationship; the individual stands over against reality or the world; a process of analysis differentiates certain elements or factors as constituting the situation and these are articulated in certain series of connections. But these are all abstract ways of taking reality. They have no significance outside the problematic moment. If they facilitate a treatment of the problem and thereby effect a readjustment of reality with itself, they give way once more, as mediate phases of experience, to further immediate phases.

The pragmatist, then, has no problem of knowledge in general just as he has no object of knowledge in general. He does not, like the idealist, generalize the subject-object relationship, appearing at the moment of his problem, into a cosmic situation in which the individual, as a knower in general, is set over against reality at large, and then proceed to evoke a mysterious and miraculous knowledge to bring the individual and reality together. Nor does he, like the realist, elevate the hypothetical and trans-experiential elements into which natural science analyzes the bit of reality directly implicated in its problem into metaphysical entities and then assign to ideas the dubious task of representing or copying the world thus conceived. Knowledge, for the pragmatist, is a function within experience. It has no transcendental reference. It does not bring the individual into an awareness of an object in general, or a reality at large. It refers to particular objects, to concretely experienced things and events. But its reference to these is not that of representing or copying existences which are given and done with, but rather that of indicating the use to which these may be put.

As a function within experience, as the characteristic instrument through which reality, at its moments of tension and conflict, readjusts and expands itself, knowledge is to be regarded as but one natural factor or energy among other such factors or energies. It operates in a perfectly natural way. It does not effect a wholesale and instantaneous change in things by merely bringing them within its scope. Its reaction upon the course of events, the difference it makes in future experience, is indirect. It does not annihilate "unwelcome facts"; it anticipates them and thereby either controls them or avoids them. It does not

evoke a prosperous turn of events by any mysterious, sleight-of-hand trick; it secures the co-operation and support of natural energies by the manner in which it enables the individual, as knower, to participate in these processes, namely with foresight and purpose.

The only problems of knowledge when knowledge is thus conceived are problems of specific structure and function. Precisely what sort of an experience is the knowledge-experience? How do natural energies combine to produce it? What are its occasions? What consequences may be expected to flow from it? What differences will it make in future experience? What is to determine its worth or validity? These are the only legitimate problems of knowledge. They have a more-than-particular reference, to be sure. And when solved, the conclusions reached have a more-than-particular validity. But while such questions most certainly constitute general problems respecting knowledge, they are not problems of *knowledge in general* apart from the concrete subject-matter furnishing its occasions and verifications. They do not arise out of the epistemological predicament at all, and are not to be solved with reference to epistemological considerations.

Now just as the pragmatist has no problem of reality at large, and no problem of knowledge in general, so he has no problem of absolute truth. For the pragmatist, truth is always concrete; it always has specific reference. In talking about it he prefers to use the adjective rather than the abstract noun. Certain aspects of experience, i.e., ideas, are said to be true on occasion with reference to certain other aspects. That is to say, there are no particular things or realities set off by themselves as constituting a realm of truth. Truth, as Professor James remarks, is something which happens to realities by reason of their standing in a certain relation to other realities.[1]

Truth is predicated of an idea with reference to its symbolic or representative character, i.e., with reference to the fact that it stands for and points to something else. But as was pointed out in the case of knowledge, this reference or representation is not a matter of copying or mirroring an external world, or of constructing in ideal form the whole of reality. For in these cases truth would seem to be either impossible or meaningless. The truth of ideas so employed would consist in the degree of faithfulness with which the copying, or the reconstructing, as the case might be, should be accomplished. But note the ambiguity of such a criterion. On the one hand, if the external world or ultimate reality were not present to consciousness so that the idea in question

[1] James, *Pragmatism*, p. 201.

might be referred to it for comparison, how would the comparison take place and the relative faithfulness of the ideal copy or construction be determined? On the other hand, if reality were present to consciousness, why must the mind resort to representing or reconstructing it in ideas? Ideas represent other realities in the sense that they express in symbolic form the meaning and value of those realities in terms of the consequences which may be expected to flow from them.

Sometimes the meaning and value so represented are well established and are used simply as instruments or tools, ready-made, as it were, for organizing and controlling further experience. At other times the idea may be tentative. The context into which it is brought continues to be ambiguous and problematic. It is uncertain whether the meaning and value represented by the "concept" or "universal" is adequate for interpreting the situation into which it is projected, or not. And it is this uncertainty which raises the question of the truth, or the lack of truth, attaching to the idea. If the meaning and value represented in the idea is adequate for the interpretation of the ambiguous situation; that is, if it actually succeeds in anticipating consequences and enables the pent-up processes to move forward, thereby restoring the immediacy of experience at that point, the idea is said to be true. If, on the other hand, the readjustment of reality with itself is not thus facilitated, the idea is said not to be true, in which case it must either be modified or, if this prove impossible, be given up and another idea tried out.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS REALITIES

We are now in a position to indicate precisely what the religious implications of pragmatism are. The type of questions which pragmatism must face if it treats the religious problem in its traditional form is, as we have seen, somewhat as follows: 'Does the religious object exist? Is it real? How can we know its reality? What is to be the criterion of the truth of our ideas concerning it? But the fundamental presupposition implied in such statements of the problem is that there is a problem of religious reality, of religious knowledge, and of religious truth in general, or at large. And it is just this presupposition that pragmatism denies. Like all other problems, religious problems must be specific; they must have their origin and their termination within the limits of a concrete situation. Pragmatism recognizes, to be sure, that there are problems of a general nature concerning the particular realities constituted by religious experience and concerning the nature and function of religious ideas. But such problems, it thinks, must have specific reference, and must be solved from the point of view of such reference.

In the first place, then, pragmatism recognizes no problem of religious reality in general. If the religious object may be said to exist at all, it must exist as a part of experience; if it is real, its reality must be empirical. Any statement of the religious problem which implies that religious reality stands over against or is external to the individual, would seem to have missed the whole point of modern epistemological criticism and to hark back to the mediaeval dualism of God and the world. If the epistemological movement had any significance at all it was that no such dualism characterizes reality; that the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine, the world and God, are distinctions which fall within experience. To use any of these categories, therefore, as if they contained a trans-experiential reference, is to revert to pre-Kantian dogmatism. And this has, of course, come to be accepted in critical circles as a commonplace—a truism. No one since the time of Hume and Kant has presumed to hold philosophic converse with trans-experiential realities. Empiricism and rationalism, naturalism and idealism, alike insist that God, if God there be at all, must be immanent—

must belong to the world of our experience. Why, then, it may be urged, does pragmatism raise the question of the possibility of a religious object conceived in trans-experiential terms? If in all philosophic quarters it is agreed that reality (religious or otherwise) must be accessible to knowledge, that it must be present in experience, either as immediate value and meaning, or as rational and necessary implications, is not pragmatism's insistence that the religious problem must not be so stated as to imply a trans-experiential God beside the mark—a case of putting up a man of straw? The pragmatist does not think so. It is precisely a part of his thesis that the naturalist, or the idealist, in so far as he has a problem of knowledge in general, and in so far as he professes to effect such a solution of this problem as to enable him to hold converse with a reality at large, ignores the principle on which he claims to stand, namely, that knowledge is of things which we experience. Experience implies no ultimate reality and poses no problem of knowledge in general. The philosopher who says that it does has a preconceived and non-empirical notion of what experience is, or a preconceived and intellectualistic notion of what reality is, or both. And in any case, he has committed the unpardonable sin, philosophically speaking: he has reinstated the discredited and disreputable *ding en sich*. And it does not help matters any that religious interests are the supposed beneficiaries of this illicit transaction. Reality at large, even though postulated in behalf of religious interests or conceived as the object of the religious consciousness, is an abstraction. It cannot be given any intelligible content. It lies outside the range of experience and is of no practical significance in morality or religion.

And so the pragmatist feels called upon to insist on the empirical character of religious reality. It is not to be appropriated all at once in a sort of spasm of moral earnestness. The values and meanings which it constitutes are hard won. They are not to be had for the asking. Their achievement involves aspiration and struggle and manifold problems.

Whatever peculiar characteristics religious realities may exhibit, then, they exhibit the general characteristics of other empirical realities. They are constituted by experience. They do not get their status as being real from any prerogative which they may be conceived to have as objects-to-be-known. Ordinarily, they do not come within the scope of knowledge at all. They are immediately experienced meanings and values. They serve as stimuli to wholesome and prosperous reactions in the life-process. So long as they perform this function, they are not objects-to-be-known; it is only when they are implicated in some prob-

lematic situation that they become such. And even then the problem is not that of knowing them as existences which are finished and done with, but rather that of anticipating the actual consequences which may be expected to flow from them.

So much for the general characteristics of religious realities. Whatever else they are, they share the characteristics common to all realities. That is to say, they are empirical, dynamic, and practical. What, then, are their characteristics *qua* religious? How are they to be differentiated from other realities? To answer this question in an adequate way requires some reference to the matter of the origin and development of religion. A true account of what a thing now is involves some insight into its history. Let it be understood, however, that we do not here confuse the categories of genesis and value. We quite agree with Professor Tufts when he says:

> We cannot test our truth by the "experience" of the child or savage. We have moved on and found new evidence in the life of the Spirit. If the humanity of a later time is to have a larger vision, a larger and richer revelation, it must test this by its own higher life.[1]

And yet we must reiterate that present value can only disclose itself, can only get itself accepted, in the light of a historical prospective. Values do not come to us ready-made. They grow up. They have a history. Their authority is that of a process serving a function and exhibiting a continuity and development. And this is precisely why Professor Tufts adds to the lines quoted above that humanity "will never outgrow the need of studying the profound and priceless deeds through which the divine has been revealed."

We have said that an empirical study of the origin and development of religion serves to eliminate certain intellectualistic presuppositions as to the essential character of the religious interest; that so far from being intellectualistic (involving a more or less conscious attitude of worship toward supernatural beings or deities), primitive religion was bound up with the vital, life-giving, life-preserving activities of the group, and was, in reality, the expression of the group's attitudes toward these activities. We have said that the origin of religion is to be sought in the social consciousness, and that the social consciousness is itself, in part, the feeling of the supreme worth of life, a sense of life's high values, which expresses itself in the demand for self-preservation. We must now pursue these considerations a step farther.

[1] Tufts, "The Ultimate Test of Religious Truth," *American Journal of Theology*, XIV, 24.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the vital, life-giving, life-preserving activities of the social group, with which primitive religion is bound up, have their origin in the most elementary instincts of the race. Just what these instincts were must be largely a matter of conjecture. It is as impossible to get back to absolute beginnings as it is to anticipate ultimate endings. Certainly the consciousness of primitive man must have been of a much simpler character than the consciousness of a civilized man of today. And the interests of a primitive social group must have been correspondingly less complex. It would not seem to be unreasonable, therefore, to attempt to describe the impulses and interests of early group life in some such simple terms as, for example, food, sex, self-protection, gregariousness, and the like. But whether the earliest activities of man centered about just these interests, and whether there were two or three or a dozen such interests, would seem to be impossible to determine. At any rate, we leave the question to those whose concern it is to speculate about it. For, as a matter of fact, we are not concerned to trace the religious consciousness back to its absolute beginnings. The study which we have undertaken does not pretend to be a history of the origin and development of religion. Neither does it presume to be a theory of the "essence" or ultimate nature of religious realities. We are trying to point out some of the implications for religion in the pragmatic doctrines. In the nature of the case, these implications would not be historical or metaphysical. Pragmatism is primarily a theory of methods. Whatever it will have to say with respect to religious realities will be said from the point of view of the possibility of scientific control with respect to religious problems. Its religious implications will not be in the nature of a criticism and evaluation of the theological ideas and doctrines that have come to be accepted as constituting the meaning of religion. It is true that pragmatism has been so construed as to seem to afford a sort of sanction to certain religious dogmas.[1] But such a use, or misuse, of the pragmatic method is to lose sight of its real import and to render it academic and formal. Pragmatism is not so much concerned with already constituted meanings as with meanings that are yet to be constituted. Its program is not so much that of testing the truth of already existing doctrines in the light of a changing experience as that of formulating new doctrines which will interpret and thereby control this experience.[2] So that it will be essential to the study we have in mind to make to conceive religion in its origin and development from

[1] James, *Pragmatism*, pp. 73, 115.

[2] Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 313.

an empirical and practical point of view rather than from a historical or metaphysical point of view.

Adopting, as it does, an empirical definition of reality, pragmatism cannot, with any consistency, concern itself with constructing a metaphysic of religion. And if it is said that in adopting a definition of reality at all, it is committing itself to a presupposition, the import of which is metaphysical, the reply must be that to say that a thing is what it is, that the reality of a thing consists in its being experienced as this, that, or the other, can scarcely be classed as a presupposition. That things are what they are experienced as would seem to be a datum. We must start with it, it is true. But we do not have to presuppose it or assume it. Such a definition of the real can be called a presupposition only by making a further presupposition, namely, that experience as constituting the real, or as giving intimations thereof, cannot speak for itself and cannot disclose its own real nature. But it is just this presupposition that the pragmatist refuses to make. He insists on taking experience at its word, on taking the meanings or existences exhibited by it at their face value. In defining religious realities in empirical terms he does not think that he has thereby fixed their nature metaphysically. The nature of religious realities, along with other realities, is fixed by experience. Defining them, or making any sort of intellectual statements about them neither adds to nor detracts from their nature as being real. They are just what they are experienced as. Their content is doubtless too rich and meaningful to be expressed in any set of categories, however comprehensive such categories may be. Certain intellectual statements may be formulated with reference to them to be sure. And such intellectual statements, while they do not fix their ontological status as being real, may become instruments for modifying their empirical character.

It is just such a set of intellectual statements that the purposes of our study demand. We must so conceive the origin and development of religion as to exhibit therein certain elements which may be articulated in a series of significant connections. Just what these elements will be and just how many of them there will be must obviously be determined by the specific demands of our problem. Our problem is to make such an analysis of religious experience as will enable us to utilize the elements thereby obtained for suggesting what we regard as a fruitful point of view and method of treatment with respect to religious problems. The purposes of our problem do not require that the elements into which we propose to analyze religious experience shall represent the

absolute beginnings of religion. All that is required is that these elements shall be typical, that is, stand for important and relevant aspects of religious experience as it has appeared at various levels of culture.

When we say, then, that primitive religion was bound up with the vital life-giving, life-preserving activities of the primitive social group, and that these activities had their origin in the most elementary instincts of the race, let it be understood that we do not feel called upon to enumerate and identify all these instincts. And when we say that we take the food and sex impulses as being typical of those instincts out of which all religions have developed, let it be understood that we are not asserting that the food and sex impulses constitute the essence of religious interests and values. The gregarious instinct, the instinct of self-preservation, and other instinctive interests and tendencies are undoubtedly reflected in the religions of primitive peoples. Some of these are doubtless significant as explaining the more individualistic and mystical aspects of religious experience. But we must reiterate that we are concerned with religion primarily from the point of view of the possibility of scientific control with respect to the problems it presents today. These problems are not theological or metaphysical primarily; they are social and ethical. For this reason we propose to view the development of religion and to analyze present-day religious realities with reference to the unfolding of the food and sex impulses. We believe that these have been the most important factors in fixing the character of present-day religious values and problems.

The earliest religious ideas and activities were undoubtedly connected in the most direct fashion with man's efforts to get food and to satisfy his sexual desires. Furthermore, the influence of the food and sex factors has been no less marked in the development of religion than in its origin. Every change in the economic and social factors conditioning the vital attitudes and activities of society has been followed by a corresponding change in religious ideas. The elaboration and refinement of the food and sex factors which we call economic and social organization has at the present time culminated in the methods of science and in the spirit of democracy; and there are reasons for seeing in the scientific and democratic movements the very highest expression of religious interests and religious values.[1]

It appears, then, that primitive religion must be thought of in relation to the vital processes exhibited in the life of a group or community. It is functional. It measures the earnestness and insight and efficacy of

[1] Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 396.

social attitudes toward the values of life. Religious ideas or systems of theology, when studied in the light of their historical background, turn out to be the expressions of attitudes and activities deemed to be efficacious for establishing and maintaining satisfactory relations with what is regarded as a foreign and hostile environment. Similarly, the historic conceptions of God or the divine turn out to be the ideal embodiments of the highest values in the way of social organization and control. Finally, the scientific and democratic tendencies, conditioning, as they do in so vital a way, the welfare of the individual and of society, are already influencing religious practices and being reflected in religious ideas.

Thus, the development of religion has been a natural process, serving vital functions and exhibiting certain continuities. The present significance and value of religion cannot be understood unless the history of this process be taken into account. Nevertheless, the two things are not to be confused. The present stage of religious development has significance and value clearly defined and peculiar to itself. The history of religions reveals something more than just a process of development: this process must be viewed as involving change; the movements exhibited in it are truly creative. There are religious interests, religious problems, religious values, today which did not and could not exist at an earlier time. And yet there has been no break in the movement culminating in these new elements of tension, adjustment, and satisfaction which characterize present-day religion. As in the case of every true evolutionary process, the evolution of religion produces the new only on the basis of the old. Certain continuities persist throughout the process. Elements of change and variation arise, to be sure, but they always arise within the process itself and are, in fact, the results of some arrangement or organization of factors previously realized. Religion has always been functional. It has always been bound up with the vital activities of the race. And these vital activities have always been connected, directly or indirectly, with the food and sex impulses. With the elaboration and refinement of the interests and activities growing out of these impulses there has been a corresponding elaboration and refinement of the motif and technique of religion. We have insisted that this vital relationship between life and religion has persisted even down to our own time. We have said that the foremost movements of our modern life, namely, the movements of science and democracy, are influencing religious practices and being reflected in religious ideas. If we are right in adopting such a view of the origin and development of religion, we are in a position to do full justice to the distinctive character

of present-day religious interests, problems, and values, and at the same time to regard them as having a history, as having arisen in a natural process, as being the outcome of natural factors.

Wherein, then, consists the distinctive character of present-day religion? It consists, we take it, in the fact that its interests and problems and values are ethical and spiritual. That is to say, while religion is still primarily concerned with preserving and promoting life, its motif has been socialized and its technique has been rationalized.

On the one hand, the elemental instincts of the race, the "ground patterns" of human life, have been so elaborated, social and economic institutions have become so complex, that the preservation and promotion of life as it now is involves a new type of attitudes and activities, new methods of co-operation, new standards of value, new capacities for appreciating the things which conduce to the general welfare. With the rise of democracy as a form of social organization, there was a tendency to translate the political values so achieved into theological terms. For example, the notion of kinship was substituted for that of sovereignty (the notion indigenous to the Hebraic conception of God and to mediaeval theology) in conceiving the divine. This tendency culminated in the last century in the doctrine of the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." A new type of religious experience followed this change of imagery; humanitarianism, altruism, philanthropy, of which we have heard so much in recent years, would seem to be its natural expression. And while there can be no doubt that these religious attitudes have, for the most part, been wholesome and beneficent, yet they seem to have run their course, to have performed their function. They do not exactly square with the psychological conditions nor express the vital interests of present-day life.[1] A new type of democracy is required as the basis of social co-operation and organization, one based, not on a metaphysical theory of natural rights, but on a new sense of personal worth and personal need. This demand for a new type of democracy is intimately related to certain tendencies and problems exhibited in present industrial movements.[2] The effectiveness of our present industrial system to produce the necessities of life is patent enough. What is less obvious, but of far greater moment, is that this system, with its machine-like organization and its one-sided method of distribution, presents a fearful peril to the masses of ordinary workmen on whose shoulders its burdens rest. What is required to avert this peril, to

[1] Tufts, "The Adjustment of the Church to the Psychological Conditions of the Present," *American Journal of Theology*, XII, 119.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

preserve to the workman his personal freedom and individuality, and to secure to him his just deserts in the way of goods produced, is not an a priori theory of natural rights, not an abstract doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, not a sentimental charity or a degrading philanthropy. These things we have in abundance. They have given us our libraries, built our hospitals, endowed our colleges, and subsidized our churches. But as social remedies they have all failed. And they have failed because they are based upon a false diagnosis of our social ills. What we need, and what we must have, if a cure is to be effected, is a new type of social justice, based on a deep sense of personal worth and personal need. The sacredness of human life, the worth of human character, the right of a human being to realize himself, and the obligation on the part of society to furnish him with the means necessary to this end, these are the supreme interests of our day. They must become a part of our social consciousness; they must mold our religious attitudes, comprise the objects of our devotion, impart to us our sense of the divine.

But the problems and values of present-day religion are not only social and ethical, they are spiritual. We have said that the interests of religion have been socialized and that its technique has been rationalized. Now it is the conscious use of rational methods that makes religious problems and values spiritual.[1] Religious aspiration and struggle have always had for their counterpart some effort to get into contact with and to control the forces felt to be responsible for weal or for woe. But in times past there was no consistent connection between the values conceived and the practices resorted to for the achievement of these values. The time was when religion practiced magic, or performed rituals, or gave blind credence to abstract theologies. But things have changed. Religion has come to itself. It has gained some insight into its proper technique. It now employs methods which are wrought out in the presence of and with reference to its particular tasks and problems. And to the extent that this insight into the relation between end and means, value and technique, reacts upon and modifies the content of the end or value, the end or value involved may be said to be spiritual.

The conscious use of scientific methods, then, is as important in fixing the distinctive character of present-day religious problems and values as is the social idealism of which we have spoken.[2] Social

[1] A. W. Moore, *Philosophical Review*, XXIV, 633.

[2] Tufts, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

idealism, apart from the promotion and application of science and education, would be worth very little. Fortunately, the new sense of personal worth and the persistent demand for social justice are everywhere accompanied by a demand for the ways and means of determining precisely how personal worth shall be preserved and enriched; what social justice shall mean in concrete cases, and how this shall be realized. In view of the growing complexity of modern life, and in view of the expanding possibilities of meeting life's issues and solving its problems by the application of scientific methods, we need to cultivate an attitude of open-mindedness, a spirit of inquiry, a willingness to participate in the efforts of science and education, and to utilize the results of these for moral and religious purposes. It is impossible to estimate how life would be enriched, how human welfare would be enhanced, under the influence of such a spirit. Certainly it is destined to be a dominant factor in the future progress of humanity; and surely its cultivation and assiduous practice is destined to be—and is even now—a matter of our chief concern. It must be reckoned among our moral assets. It must be associated with our highest values. It must enter into our conception of the divine.

Now it is important to note that the socializing of religious interests and ideals and the rationalizing of religious methods have by no means come about as separate and independent tendencies; on the contrary, they have been inextricably bound up in the one process of preserving and promoting life, and each tendency has reacted upon and modified the other. On the one hand, the conscious use of rational methods in controlling natural forces in behalf of human interests was the immediate outcome of a demand for present and first-hand contact with reality. The most distinctive characteristic of the period introducing our modern era was man's unwillingness to forego all sense of present reality, even in the interest of an inheritance incorruptible and eternal. The world that now is had been conceived to be imperfect, finite, "infected with non-being." All human interests and values had been transferred to the world that is to be. Present existence was transitory and unreal, and was to be despised. On such terms, life was nothing short of a tragedy, unless indeed some compensation could be conceived in the form of another and better mode of existence. And this was precisely the remedy resorted to. But the rediscovery of the secular world of the Greeks with all its beauty and wonder stimulated man's natural self anew, and made him strangely indifferent to his erstwhile interest in the supernatural and eternal. So that, when the modern spirit, first

expressing itself in the intellectual daring and spiritual optimism of the Renaissance, revelled in its new sense of reality, "from heaven to earth come down," it was not so much the result of a skepticism with reference to theological dogmas as the inevitable demand of human nature that it be permitted here and now to come to terms with reality. This demand, however, was at first ambiguous. For although there was a hungering and thirsting after the real, no adequate method was at hand for determining just how the real was to be defined and appropriated. And it was this demand for the ways and means for defining and appropriating reality that posed the first problems of modern science. Furthermore, these problems required the construction of bold and unique hypotheses, which, in the very nature of the case, could not be immediately verified. Here the scientist's attitude was more than a curious speculation about the world as being already rational or moral; it was the expression of the deepest demand of human nature, the demand for rationalizing and controlling the world of experience and the determination to satisfy this demand. And this is still the attitude of the scientist in so far as the solution of his problems requires insight and ingenuity and patience. The scientist is and must be an idealist. Combined with his idealism, he must have courage and patience and perseverance of the most heroic type. This is the sort of attitude, the quality of faith, the type of idealism, that has created all our values and made our civilization possible. It is essentially religious. For religion, at least as we know it today, is not a "private, personal relation between a man and some supernatural source of character and power." It does not exhaust itself in hairsplitting speculations about the attributes of God or the depravity of man. It is not a short-cut method for settling, once for all, the problems of life. It is an attitude of faith, a moral venturesomeness, a working hypothesis by which the religionist means to have a share in the solution of these problems. Religion expresses man's deepest needs and highest aspirations; at the same time it strives to objectify these aspirations, to impose these needs upon an environment and make it answer to them. Such has always been the spirit of true religion. It has ever been a venture, a faith, an effort to come to terms with the "powers that be." And if it is only in late years that it has come to realize its true function and its proper technique, nevertheless its attitude of desperate concern, its willingness to stake its all on a hope and then to work for the realization of that hope, with whatever methods it may devise, has been back of all of man's efforts to better himself (science included), to propitiate

the hostile forces in his environment, and to gain the support of the forces felt to be friendly.

But if the religious attitude furnished science with its motive, it must be said that science has repaid the debt with interest. It has been the methods and the achievements of modern science very largely that have socialized the interests and ideals of religion and paved the way for a genuinely social and moral order.

> The recognition that natural energy can be systematically applied through experimental observation to the satisfaction and multiplication of concrete wants—that is doubtless the greatest single discovery ever imported into the life of man, save perhaps the discovery of language. Science has made the control of natural forces for the aims of life so inevitable that for the first time man is relieved from overhanging fear, with its wolf-like scramble to possess and accumulate, and is freed to consider the more gracious question of securing to all an ample and liberal life.[1]

Science has made the "experimental or applied habit of mind" current coin in the realm of social and economic values. Through the multiplication of human wants and needs, it has made men more and more dependent upon each other, and has thereby stimulated commerce with its socializing and civilizing influences. By developing an elaborate system of methods for intercommunication between all parts of the world and all levels of culture it has laid the foundation for a type of social consciousness which may well be expected to exercise a controlling influence in the future affairs of humanity. And finally, by increasing men's capacities for creating and conserving values, thereby freeing them from a bondage to dire need and relentless struggle and competition, it has placed human existence upon an immeasurably higher level where intelligence and foresight and co-operation are destined to reign supreme.

[1] Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays*, p. 58.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

Now the reciprocal character of the tendencies culminating in what we have described as the socializing of religious interests and ideals and the rationalizing of religious methods, is itself of profound religious significance. Its immediate import is, of course, as we have seen, with reference to the distinctive character of present-day religious problems and values. But this is not all. In addition to fixing the character of these problems and values as being ethical and spiritual, it fixes very definitely the status of religious knowledge and truth. We have seen that all knowledge is concerned directly or indirectly with creating values. It follows that of the judgments constituting the knowledge process, some are descriptive judgments and some are judgments of practice, but that both of these are essential to the final purpose of all knowledge, namely, the creation of values.[1] If, now, we bear in mind that this reciprocity between the component factors of knowledge, namely, evaluation and description, is actually implicated in the problems and values of present-day religion, we shall be in a position to discount some of the more or less popular and erroneous notions about the essential character of religious knowledge. More particularly, it must appear that religious knowledge is not a process of representing or copying, as accurately as possible, the true nature of religious reality or realities. It is not a matter of scaling the abysmal depths of doubt in order finally to establish the character of the world as being good or rational. It is not a method for getting into satisfactory relations in any wholesale, mechanical fashion with the "powers that be," or for appropriating, once for all, the reality of *a* religious object. It is not concerned with existences, as such, at all. It has to do with values and meanings in terms of implied future consequences. It is concerned with already existing and finished values only as data in a process of realizing or creating new values; that is, only when these values become implicated in a problematic situation and thereby assume cognitive significance or reference. At other times religious realities or values do not come within the scope of the knowledge process at all. So that there is no problem of knowing them in the sense in which such a problem is commonly urged.

[1] Cf. Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic,* chap. xiv.

The so-called problem of religious knowledge, in general, is an aspect of the epistemological predicament. It is a generalization of the subject-object relationship which emerges at moments of specific, concrete religious problems. In this connection, it is important to note that even in the case of the philosophic movements centering about the general problem of knowledge, these movements had their occasions within the limits of concrete, practical situations, when social values were being weighed in the balance and found wanting.[1] The reconstructions effected at such times of moral crisis, together with the methods employed therein, were hypostasized—given cosmic significance. The reconstructed values were conceived to constitute ultimate reality or reality in general, and the dialectic involved in the process of reconstruction was thought of as conditioning all possible contact with this reality. The problem of knowledge then became the problem of traversing the successive steps in this dialectical process. But we have seen that the problems of religion, like all other problems, are concrete and specific. They are the problems of some individual, or of some community, or of some nation, at some particular time. There is no dialectical process for solving them all at once. Any philosophy which assumes that they are already eternally solved, already eternally transcended in a higher and better order of reality, contributes nothing whatever to their actual solution. The only solution of religious problems that can satisfy living, striving, suffering human beings is one which involves the use of resources and energies co-ordinate with the problems themselves. And so we insist that religious knowledge must be specific. It must refer to particular problems. It must involve natural factors. It must be a matter of anticipating and controlling future experience by reference to values and meanings experienced in the past.

Religious knowledge, then, is not different in kind from any other sort of knowledge. It is instrumental or functional. It is primarily concerned with creating values. To this end it employs descriptive judgments as well as judgments of practice. But this is not all. If motif and technique, end and means, evaluation and description, are truly reciprocal, the formation of religious motives and ends, the actual process of judging religious values, must itself be capable of scientific control.

Now the possibility of a scientific control of judgments of religious value would seem to follow from what we have said as to the continuity of experience, the general nature and function of knowledge, and

[1] Moore, *Pragmatism and Its Critics*, pp. 31–33.

the reciprocal character of its component elements, i.e., evaluation and description. Certain objections, however, are urged against the proposition that religious judgments can be so controlled. For example, it is said that any attempt to determine religious values by scientific procedure is to eliminate from these values all that makes them religious, and indeed, to reduce them to physical or mechanical terms. But such an objection labors under a too narrow interpretation of what "scientific procedure" means. "Scientific" as applied to a process of investigation, does not refer to the particular form or type of the results obtained, but rather to the essentially logical character of the technique employed in the process.[1] The particular form of the results of any scientific inquiry will depend upon the character of the subject matter with which the inquiry is concerned, or upon the specific purpose with reference to which the subject-matter is treated. So that it is entirely possible to employ scientific procedure in an inquiry respecting religious values without thereby reducing these values to a physical or mechanical basis.

A more typical objection, however, to our contention that judgments of religious value must lend themselves to scientific control is that scientific control of judgments is possible only where the judgments constitute statements of general conditions which, although they are capable of complete logical determination, are, as a matter of fact, hypothetical and therefore contain no reference to individual acts; and that religious judgments, since they do refer to individual acts and are therefore categorical rather than hypothetical in character, will not lend themselves to such control, but must find their source and sanction in some transcendental faculty such as intuition or conscience.[2] But the assumption implied in this objection cannot be sustained. It is not true, in the first place, that scientific judgments are concerned wholly, or even primarily, with general or universal propositions in and for themselves. On the contrary, they are always made in the interest of, or with reference to, individual judgments of practice.

> The scientific judgment, the formulation of a connection of conditions, has its origin in and is developed for the specific and sole purpose of freeing and reinforcing acts of judgments that apply to unique and individual cases.[3]

That is to say, there is nothing about religious judgments, in the way of specific, practical reference, which does not also characterize scientific judgments. Furthermore, it is not true that religious judgments would

[1] Dewey, "The Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality," *Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago*, III, 116.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

lose their distinctively religious character by thus being assimilated to the type of logical treatment accorded to judgments of science. For, as we have seen, judgments of science have precisely those logical features in the way of specific, practical reference that characterize religious judgments. So that the scientific control of the latter type of judgments would simply be a matter of taking advantage of possibilities of logical treatment already employed in the control of a fundamentally similar type of judgment.

But assuming the possibility of scientific control of religious judgments, what are the conditions of such control? How is it to be effected? It is obvious, in the first place, that a scientific control of any sort of judgment requires a set of limiting terms or ultimate intellectual standpoints, such as the general concepts or categories which operate in the several sciences and serve as instruments or tools in particular acts of judgments.[1] If religious judgments are to lend themselves to scientific control, such a set of limiting terms or ultimate intellectual standpoints, appropriate to the particular subject-matter with which these judgments are concerned, and to the specific purpose with reference to which the subject-matter is judged, must be available. And, as a matter of fact, there are such religious concepts or categories at hand. When we speak of faith, or freedom, or goodness, or God, we mean to give expression, however vaguely and ambiguously, to certain standpoints and standards felt to be authoritative in religious experience. And if the content of these terms is not as specific as the content embodied in the categories of the physical or biological sciences, if the terms themselves do not operate as readily and as precisely as scientific categories operate, this is not because they have had any other than an empirical origin or can have any other than a functional significance. Their content is indefinite and their operation is uncertain because their empirical and functional character is not generally recognized. They are thought of as having their origin and sanction in transcendental sources. So that at times of moral decision, in situations requiring religious insight and judgment, they are employed without conscious reference to the fact that they are functions within a process, and that they are to be checked up and modified by the exigencies of that process. The result is that religious experience is capricious and unstable. It is determined from without, in an external and mechanical fashion. It is made to depend upon supernatural power and direction. Its values are donations vouchsafed by a divine grace. Prosperous changes and events are of the nature

[1] Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

of miracles, the conditions of whose occurrence are not subject to human control. That they have occurred once is no guarantee that they can be made to persist, or that they can be made the bases for inducing other prosperous and beneficent changes. It is small wonder that the decisions and judgments by which religious experience is actually constructed and sustained are said to be subjective or unreal. They are subject to no general conditions of control. They are discontinuous and unconnected; each is a law unto itself. Therefore they have little or no objective significance or validity. What is required to give them objectivity and thus to render religious experience stable and coherent is an insight into the empirical and functional character of the standpoints and standards with reference to which they are formed. It must be recognized that these general concepts or categories, since they are empirical and functional, are subject to constant change and modification, and that they must be constantly criticized and reinterpreted in the light of new conditions and needs. And this recognition must become articulate in a systematic attempt at such criticism and reinterpretation. There must be a "logic of conduct," a science of the meaning and value of fundamental religious ideas. It is obvious that a historical-scientific treatment of such general ideas as knowledge, faith, freedom, salvation, the divine, etc., would give to these ideas new content, endow them new working value, and thus make them potent instruments in the process of organizing and expanding experience.

But clearly defined categories are not sufficient for a scientific control of religious judgments. In addition to these, there must be formulated a set of statements regarding the general conditions and relations obtaining in the subject-matter to be judged.[1] Now the subject-matter of religious judgments, like that of all judgments of practice, includes as one of its elements the motive, or attitude, or disposition, of the judger. That is to say, in judging that this or that is good, or ought to be done, the judger is in reality judging his own character; he is putting himself on record, as being, at the moment of his judgment, of some particular disposition rather than of some other.

> The judger (in an ethical judgment) is engaged in judging himself; and thereby in so far is fixing the conditions of all further judgments of all further types whatsoever. Put in more psychological terms, we may say that the judgment realizes, through conscious deliberation and choice, a certain motive heretofore vague and impulsive; or it expresses a habit in such a way as not merely to strengthen it practically, but as to bring to consciousness both its emotional worth and its significance in terms of certain kinds of consequences.[2]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 131. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

But if the subject-matter to be judged is constituted in part by motives or dispositions, as the momentary expressions of the character of the judger, it follows that any attempt to formulate a connection of the conditions and relations obtaining in the subject-matter must have as a part of its task a thorough psychological analysis of the processes implicated in choice or judgment. There can be no doubt that these processes are as definite as the series of events conditioning some occurrence in the physical world if only we knew what they are. And precisely what they are must be made the subject of psychological analyses. They must be made objective. It must be determined what psychical conditions are implicated in a given motive or attitude, and what the relations of these are to the motive or attitude and to one another. It must be possible to single out those conditions which are connected with the judgment in a logically necessary way, and those which are connected with it in a merely incidental or superficial way. This will make it possible to treat the subjective element in judgments of practice objectively. It will lay the foundations for the sort of control to which religious judgments must lend themselves if they are to have objective significance and validity.

But the subject-matter of religious judgments is much more comprehensive than that which is constituted by the motives, dispositions, and the like, of the individual who is judging. We have said that religious judgments are concerned with creating religious values and that these values consist, for the most part, of certain prosperous and beneficent types of social organization and economic control. It is obvious, therefore, that the attempt to furnish the general conditions of a scientific control of religious judgments must likewise include as a part of its task an analysis of these social and economic institutions which may enter into the process of reconstructing and expanding religious values.

For the purposes of such an analysis, advantage must be taken of all types of scientific investigations whatsoever which tend to establish in objective form the connections of conditions obtaining in social situations. From the point of view of the scientific control of religious judgments, there is no hard and fast distinction between the analyses effected by the social sciences and those effected by the physical or biological sciences. All sorts of physical and biological factors are implicated in the social and moral betterment of any community. These implications must be made objective; they must be articulated in a system of connections. There is no question here of "mechanizing" religious values or of reducing them to a physical basis. Whatever

statements are effected concerning the connections of conditions obtaining within the subject-matter of judgments of religious value have the same import as is contained in all scientific "universals," namely, that of releasing and reinforcing individual acts of judgments. So far from implying the reduction of religious values to a physical or mechanical basis, the possibility of a scientific control of religious judgments implies that there is such a continuity within the several areas of experience as makes it possible to utilize the statements effected with reference to conditions obtaining in one area of experience in effecting statements of conditions obtaining in another area, without thereby reducing the one kind of experience to the other. Hence the task of establishing universal connections of conditions within the subject-matter of religious judgments may include as many types of analysis as are necessary to make these universals thoroughly objective. And, indeed, nothing short of this will render the scientific control of religious judgments possible.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

The discussion of religious knowledge contained in the preceding chapter hinted at the possibility and the necessity of an empirical and experimental theology. Now the idea of a theology that will be at once empirical and experimental is common enough in philosophical circles. But the idea has not been sufficiently emphasized or adequately developed. The present chapter will be devoted to these ends. An effort will be made to indicate in a very general way the program to be pursued and the methodology to be employed by such an empirical and experimental study and to justify the use of the term "theology" in connection with a science thus defined.

To begin with, it will be important to bear in mind the commonly recognized distinction between theology and religion. The religious mode of experiencing is primarily appreciative. Only during exceptional periods and in the experience of exceptional peoples does it become reflective and deliberately set about to make itself intelligible. Ordinarily it is an immediate sense or a direct appreciation of life's high values which passes over into habits, dispositions, and character appropriate thereto. Sometimes the habits, dispositions, and character thus formed and relied upon as being appropriate to religious interests turn out to be inappropriate and inadequate. At such times, religion is thrown back upon itself; it becomes reflective. It is confronted with the problem of the character of the divine and of the attitudes and activities appropriate to a fruitful contact with it. The articulation and solution of this problem is what we mean by "theology." Theology, then, is not to be confused with religion; it is the result of religion's effort to explain itself for purposes of control. It is thus a science. But as a science, it has been rendered more or less unique by the circumstance that its method as well as its motive was furnished by religion. That is to say, theology was precluded by the peculiar sanctity attaching to its subject-matter from adopting and developing empirical and experimental methods. Like other sciences, it was "born in partiality," but unlike other sciences, it failed to achieve that degree of detached impartiality that is the prime condition of fruitful methods in any science. This of course accounts for its traditionally

dogmatic and non-empirical character. It also serves to indicate the true nature of the so-called conflict between religion and science. This conflict has in reality involved, not religion and science in general, but certain of the natural sciences and the science of theology. It arose out of the fact that at first both the natural sciences and theology were dominated by metaphysical points of view. Neither had as yet learned to regard its explanations as instruments of control. The analyses and generalizations made by each were supposed to be ontologically exhaustive and exclusive. And as the points of view from which these respective analyses and generalizations were made represented empirically distinct types of interest, they came to be regarded as metaphysically incompatible, and gave rise to a conflict which continued to scandalize our modern life even after the natural sciences became positivistic and pragmatic. For theology has persisted in holding itself out as a metaphysic and, in that rôle, has continued to discount the investigations and deliverances of the natural sciences.

But the metaphysical pretensions of theology are without any theoretical or practical warrant. For, in the first place, it is not essential to the religious mode of experiencing to regard it as a reaction to the world as a whole as being rational or moral. Whenever religion has conceived its own attitude in terms of such a wholesale reaction to the world, it has done so under the stress of demands made upon it by some absolutistic type of philosophy. Left to work out its own attitudes and activities, it has been concerned with the realization, preservation, and promotion of concrete human values. Furthermore, it is not essential to the reality of the religious mode of experiencing to demonstrate its ontological status by any sort of dialectical proofs or apologetics. Religious realities are their own best, and only, evidence. There is, then, no occasion for vouching for or for vindicating their ontological integrity. There is of course a need of defining their empirical character and of exhibiting their practical value. But this is quite a different matter. It does not imply a metaphysical point of departure, nor does it involve the use of dialectical methods.

Theology must forego its erstwhile metaphysical pretensions, but it may, however, take a new lease of life by adopting once for all an empirical point of view and developing experimental methods. Thus will it become a science in the sense which first defined its purpose and its task. It will assume the reality of its subject-matter, take for granted the existence of the divine, precisely as physics and chemistry assume the existence of matter, or biology the existence of living

organisms. If such an assumption appears to be somewhat bold in view of the unintelligible character of what we mean to imply by the divine, this but shows the greater need of an empirical and experimental treatment of religious realities such as we are urging. It is small wonder that the content of the divine is vague; the sort of intellectual treatment accorded it by the methods of theology has not been calculated to bestow upon it any great signification in the way of practical, concrete meaning. And even so, the case is no worse with theology than with natural philosophy in its prescientific stage; the scholastic conception of substance or matter was scarcely more intelligible than the traditional conception of the divine. But when theology acts on the positivistic cue furnished by the natural sciences; when it leaves off following the will-o'-the-wisp of "design" and "special creation" and "providence" and "attributes"; when it assumes once for all the reality of its subject-matter as embodied in practical, concrete experience and concerns itself with constructing such a set of intellectual statements about this subject-matter as will facilitate its control, we may expect the content of the divine to begin to assume an empirical and practical character approaching in definiteness and fruitfulness the great conceptions wrought out by the physical and biological sciences.

The program which is here contemplated for the new theology, then, would amount to nothing more nor less than the definition of fundamental social values, and the methodology to be employed would of course develop in accordance with empirical and experimental canons. This would involve, in the first place, a criticism of traditional and contemporary standards of value in the bearing that these have on the several areas of social practice. And such a criticism would, in turn, lead up to the construction, under carefully worked out conditions of control, of new standards of value such as might be shown to be demanded for the present time.

Now an objection will undoubtedly be urged to the use of the term theology to distinguish such a science of social values. The position taken in this study is that there is no impropriety in such a usage. In support of this contention, it is to be noted, in the first place, that the particular concepts in which religious values have been embodied at the several levels of culture where the God-idea has appeared are not to be thought of as so many efforts to cognize one eternal divine object, transcending experience, but must be regarded as instruments for mediating and controlling experience. A given idea of the divine owes its content, then, not to any transcendent object to which it is

supposed to refer by way of representation, but to the social context in which it functions. That certain traits or features have persisted in the evolution of the concept of the divine and have, indeed, fixed the main outlines of the mediaeval and modern God, but points to the tremendous importance of the historical conditions which gave this idea of the divine its setting; it does not at all determine the content of future conceptions of the divine, nor does it commit theology once for all to the consideration of the traditional God as its subject-matter, or to the use of methods appropriate thereto. It was an accident that the science of theology arose at a time when men's ideas of the divine centered in the supernatural. Or, if it is better to say that theology arose because of a disintegration of human values and the subsequent transfer of men's interests and hopes to the superhuman, at least it may be said that the problem articulated by theology and the methods employed by it were determined by this dualism between the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine. And this dualism was itself the accident of certain obvious social conditions. There was a breaking down of human values and standards with no methods at hand for effecting a reconstruction of these at the level of social practice. So that it comes to the same thing: theology is not to be committed forever to the consideration of a subject-matter or to the use of methods whose content and character were incidental to social conditions long since left behind.

Again, it is to be noted that the history of the sciences affords ample warrant for the use of the term theology in connection with a science of social values. The history of psychology is the most notable case in point. And here again we have an instance of the sort of thing noted in connection with the beginnings of theology: a dualism reflecting social conditions of the time fixes the content of the subject-matter and the character of the methods of the science. The soul was regarded as immaterial entity, which of course was not to be apprehended through the medium of ordinary experience. The consideration of this immaterial soul through non-empirical methods was known as rational psychology. In time the immaterial soul gave way to mental faculties as the subject-matter of psychology; and mental faculties in turn gave way to states of consciousness; and states of consciousness to behavior, until now we have a psychology as different from the rational psychology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the sort of theology contemplated by this discussion differs from the dogmatic and speculative theology of earlier times.

Just what the content of the new theology's conceptions of the divine will turn out to be is of course a matter to be settled by present-day experience. The writer has no theological axes to grind nor any preconceived notions of the divine to defend. The point to be made is that there is no a priori reason why theology should not now concern itself with problems and conceive its subject-matter in terms other than those which have to do with the traditional God. To be sure it would be a part of the task of the new theology to work out some way or ways of conceiving God which would render this conception of the divine a more effective instrument of social control. But it goes without saying that any conception thus worked out would not be exhaustive or exclusive. It must also be plain that the task just referred to, namely, the definition of God, would not comprise the entire task of theology. Theology is to be a science of the divine; but the divine as the subject-matter of theology will have a broader connotation than is contained in the notion of God. Only an absolutistic philosophy can restrict the concern of theology to that of God. And it can do this only by articulating an ultimate aim for all the sciences, or for science in general, and by so defining this aim as to exclude from it any concern for the concrete problems of practical life.

But it may be said that however appropriate the term theology is to a science whose task it is to define fundamental social values, there is, as a matter of fact, no need for such a science, inasmuch as the task assigned to it is already receiving full recognition and adequate treatment at the hands of one of the oldest and best established of the philosophical sciences, namely, ethics. It must be admitted that the task of theology as it is here conceived will be identical in important respects with that of ethics. Certainly no hard and fast distinction can be made between the two. And yet traditional ethics has suffered from certain defects or limitations which have precluded its preforming in an adequate manner the task here assigned to theology. For one thing, its interests and methods have been so largely historical and controversial as to leave little or no opportunity for the treatment of issues and problems presented in the actual life of the times. And even where such a treatment has been attempted the problems involved have been conceived and stated in too great isolation from the specific context in which they appear. Or, in the absence of these defects, another one, equally grave, has been present to vitiate the services rendered by ethical studies; these studies have been marked by too little of the imaginative and constructive experimentation that has proved so fruitful

in other fields of scientific endeavor. Their point of view and method have been too formal. They have been too much occupied with trying to square our present experience with old standpoints and standards and too little concerned with constructing new standpoints and standards for mediating a larger and richer experience.

It must be said there is considerable work being done in ethics to which the above criticisms do not at all apply. There are a number of ethicists who have frankly adopted a biological and social point of view and are making of ethics an experimental science in the truest sense of the word. Between the program being pursued by such thinkers and writers and the task here assigned to theology no distinction whatever can be made. It would seem, however, that the motive actuating the new ethics and the method being employed by it are so important as to mark it off once for all from ethics of the traditional types. And it would seem that the development of an empirical and experimental theology would afford a practicable means for effecting this distinction or separation.

But whether the new ethics is assimilated to the new theology or the two sciences find it advantageous to develop side by side, there are other considerations of a more practical nature which demand an independent science of theology such as is here suggested. These considerations have to do with the utilization of all the physical and moral resources represented by institutions of religious culture and inspiration for purpose of scientific control in religious experience. Such considerations do not of course constitute a ground for any ultimate distinction between ethics and theology. They are incidental to social conditions and arrangements which have their roots in a more or less remote past. The church, the Bible school, the theological seminary of the future, must no doubt undergo radical changes both as to structure and as to function. But for all that, they are at the present time the controlling factors in determining the content or quality of religious experience. They are the media through which the new theory of values is to be assimilated to religious practice. And this process of assimilation will be facilitated by a reconstruction of traditional theology. Much of the best work being done in the criticism and construction of social values is ineffective because its benefits are not available to the rank and file of the people. This circumstance must be overcome if the new theory of values is to adequately affect social practice. The institutions of conventional religion must be enlisted in behalf of the social and scientific point of view in religious

reconstruction. The physical and moral resources of the church must be utilized. The "higher criticism" of religious documents, the "modern" point of view in theology, the "progressive" movement in church organization and activity are all means to this end. With all the hostility aroused and opposition encountered by these tendencies, they give promise of larger and more immediate results than can be looked for from a science of ethics whose traditional status as a philosophical discipline renders its investigations and deliverances more or less inaccessible to religious practice. But these tendencies must go the whole length. They must look toward and culminate in a reconstruction of theology.

CHAPTER VII

GOD[1]

Our problem in the present chapter is to work out a definition of God. But first we must reiterate what was said at the beginning of chapter iii with reference to the point of view from which we are concerned to treat religious realities. We are concerned with religious realities, we said, primarily as being implicated in certain social and ethical problems. The purposes of our study require that we shall so analyze religious realities, that is, formulate such a set of intellectual statements about religious meanings and values, as to constitute a basis for the solution of religious problems and for the control of religious experience. This point of view is fundamental to what we shall have to say as to the existence and character of God. All the while we shall be thinking in terms of the problematic situation and with a view to the possibility of scientific control. We shall not be concerned to catalogue the various historical significations that have attached to the God-idea; nor shall we utilize such historical data as are essential to the demands of our study as a basis for constructing any sort of metaphysic of the divine. Again, we shall not be concerned to estimate the relative truth or validity of the several historical conceptions of God. We shall rather aim at effecting such a reinterpretation of the divine as will render it a meaningful concept in the light of present psychological conditions.

Pursuant to this aim, we take as our point of departure a fact on which we have already dwelt, namely, that in the present democratic and scientific movements we have the foundations for a new type of social organization, which is destined to be the determining factor in future conceptions of the divine. We have said that at every level of culture the God-idea, where it is present at all, is the ideal embodiment of the highest social values peculiar to that level and reflects social attitudes and activities appropriate to the realization and maintenence of those values. We have also said that the highest social values have

[1] Certain sections of the material included in this chapter appeared in an article in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XXIX (October, 1918), under the title "Religious Worship and Social Control," and are reproduced here with the consent of that *Journal*.

usually assumed the form of certain prosperous and beneficent types of social organization. What we have now to point out is that the evolution of the God-idea has gone hand in hand with the development or expansion of methods of organizing and controlling life in social groups. It will be convenient to conceive of this process of social and political development with the corresponding development of the concept of the divine as exhibiting three general stages. The first stage may be said to begin with the earliest Hebrew notions of Yahweh as a tribal god and to continue until the rise of democracy among European peoples in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In this stage the most characteristic conception of God or the divine was that of a mighty monarch ruling and protecting his people.[1] At a time when one social group was constantly subjected to the trickery and treachery of hostile groups, social life was best preserved and promoted by patriarchal and monarchal forms of government. The patriarch or king, as the case might be, was the actual embodiment of the highest social values. It was natural, then, that the social consciousness of the group, the consciousness arising from pursuing common interests, from meeting common difficulties, and from achieving common values, should embody itself in some analogous form.

With the rise of democracy, there was a change in the imagery employed in conceiving God. He was no longer thought of solely in terms of sovereignty and protection; he came to be conceived in terms of fatherhood.[2] He was the father of all men and all men were brothers. And this tendency to conceive God in terms of a father who was to be trusted and obeyed betrays the metaphysical presuppositions of the new democratic ideals. These ideals were rooted in an a priori theory of natural rights. The rights of man on the basis of which it was proposed to construct all possible forms of government were deduced from what was conceived to have been man's natural state before he was brought under the authority of social and political institutions. That is to say, these rights were given; they were donations to man from an inherent and inalienable humanity. Man was as dependent as ever. He had achieved no rights, and could claim no rights except in the name of his innate humanity. And these natural rights were given once

[1] The notion of kinship was, of course, also present as an element in primitive conceptions of God.

[2] Jesus' conception of God as father was projected into a social context which rendered it for the most part unintelligible and sterile until the rise of humanitarian sentiments and democratic institutions.

for all. Men might come and men might go, but their rights went on forever. Nothing could change them; nothing could happen to give them new content or meaning. It is not to be wondered that a type of democracy based on such a conception of man and his metaphysically fixed and finished nature proved inadequate to meet the demands made upon it by the expanding life of subsequent times. It was precluded by its very presuppositions from keeping pace with the movement of things. The changes in economic and industrial conditions throughout the nineteenth century literally made man over again so that he was a new being with new capacities and needs and obligations. But from the point of view of the doctrine of natural rights, there are no capacities or needs or obligations other than those implied in the nature of man. If man has seemed to change, so much the worse for man. The conditions which may seem to create new capacitites or to impose new obligations or to require new standpoints and standards are abnormal; they are to be ignored; the measure of what can be done by man and for man is determined by his nature; all efforts at economic and industrial betterment must prove their validity by reference to what man everlastingly is, independent of the exigencies of time and place.

So much for the social and political theory characteristic of the second stage of the process of social and religious development. The religious experience and theological imagery appropriate to this type of theory, as we have seen, centered in the doctrine of the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." Now there can be no doubt that this conception of God as father and man as brother marked a decided advance in religious attitudes and activities, just as the doctrine of natural rights expressed a higher level of social and political theory and introduced beneficent innovations in the actual life of the times. But, theologically speaking, men were still dependent on a power not themselves. Whatever new there was in their religious experience in the way of emotional satisfaction as a result of conceiving God as their father and mankind as their brethren was given. The new religious values were donations vouchsafed by a divine paternalism or a human fraternalism. They were once for all the sort of things to be expected from such relationships. If other things seemed good and desirable in the way of social justice and industrial co-operation, calling for attitudes and activities other than those growing out of the relation of man to God as his father, or to humanity as his brethren, these other good and desirable things, together with the attitudes and activities appropriate to them, lay

outside the scope of religion.[1] Religion need not, indeed, exhaust itself in the emotional satisfactions to be realized from the relation sustained to God and to humanity. It might give concrete expression to its doctrines if occasion seemed to warrant it. It might practice charity, philanthropy, humanitarianism; these are the things that are to be expected in a world where all men are dependent on God and where some are more highly blessed than others. But as for inquiring into the whys and wherefores of a social order in which certain classes are dependent on certain other classes and in which all classes are dependent on a power not themselves, whose favors are to be had by petition and faith and childlike obedience, with such an inquiry religion would have nothing to do.

It must be obvious that any conception of the divine merely in terms of sovereignty and kinship are hopelessly inadequate to express the interests and ideals of present-day life, which are felt to be supremely worth while. The economic and industrial conditions today are demanding a new type of social organization, a new democracy, handicapped by no preconceptions as to the natural rights of man, nor by any preconceptions as to his natural needs, capacities, or obligations. To meet this demand there is the ever-growing conviction that social life and social development are not guided from without or directed from above; that these constitute a process that is self-determined and creative; and that the rights that are natural to man are those which have proved themselves in terms of social worth within this process. "We are coming to the new thought that society is guided—if we may still use that word—not by king or class, but by the infinite action and reaction of all its members.[2] In a genuinely democratic society there are no privileged classes. The differentiation of classes, characteristic of the older orders of society, must give way to a differentiation of persons. But if the differentiation of persons is the goal of a democratic society, this is not to be accomplished by any *a priori recognition* of personality as something which is already given and which needs only to be recognized. Personality is never given as a natural and inalienable endowment; it has to be achieved. And it is the task of a democratic society to achieve it or create it in the persons

[1] It is important to recall that the great movements in the direction of social and industrial reforms that characterized the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had their origins outside the pale of orthodox religion.

[2] H. A. Overstreet, "The Democratic Conception of God," *Hibbert Journal*, XI, 402.

of its members. To this end, the members of such a society must share in full the social and moral responsibilities involved. If the government is to be *for* the people, it must be *of* the people and *by* the people. And it is the spectacle of a people leading themselves and thereby achieving larger capacities for leadership, realizing new qualities of of personality, that presents the goal and poses the problems of true democracy.

Now the assurance with which the democracy of today looks toward this goal and undertakes the solution of these problems is not the sentimental optimism or the dogmatic certainty of eighteenth-century society. Democracy has learned by bitter experience that men may have rights and yet be victims of injustice and oppression. The possession of rights, fulminated for mankind before society with its moving, changing, growing life began, somehow has not availed to secure to men actual well-being in concrete social situations. Democracy has found that the only rights worth having are those which are achieved within the process and with reference to the situations in which they are to operate; that rights are functions which articulate themselves in connection with a social dialectic and always imply certain counterparts in the way of capacities, needs, obligations, and the like. And whatever assurance democracy has with reference to its future is grounded in the fact that no rights ever are given; that these must be achieved, and achieved in a competition with other possible rights such as is calculated to carry the life of society along, to raise it to higher and higher levels. In the process of achieving their rights, men have learned the art of living together and have come to realize all their satisfactions and values in so living. The successful issues of social intercourse, with all the ways and means devised for making these possible, have given rise to a freer spirit, a social idealism, a moral venturesomeness, which is ever devising new ways and means for effecting other prosperous issues of social life, for realizing new social values. And it is this social idealism, this moral venturesomeness, objectifying itself through the methods and achievements of science, that furnishes the new democracy with its motive power and fills it with hope for the future.

Now it is obvious that this new type of social organization, this new democracy, "making itself, lifting itself through its very imperfections—through the struggle of these with one another—to planes of more effective realization,"[1] must have a profound bearing on our

[1] Robert A. Woods, "Democracy, a New Unfolding of Human Powers," *Studies in Philosophy and Psychology by Former Students of Charles Edward Garman*, p. 128.

future conceptions of the divine. If we are justified in our contention that dominant types of social or political organization have been the determining factor in fixing the content of the God-idea at the several levels of culture where this concept has appeared, we may say that the God of the future must be a democratic God; that whatever else we mean by the divine as it is now constituted, we must mean a power, that is, in a very fundamental sense, we ourselves. The most effectively divine power or agency in the world today is the social consciousness of a genuinely democratic community. It is the social consciousness as the ideal embodiment of the hard-won values of mankind that is effecting whatever of good there is in our present-day life and civilization. And this effectiveness of the social consciousness in controlling and directing the movement of things is nothing more than is to be expected in view of the increasingly effective methods for creating and conserving social values and for bringing these to the consciousness of the community. Progress in the life of the community as in the life of the individual is conditioned by the availability of the meaningful aspects of past experience for the solution of present problems. But this condition is fulfilled only as the meaningful aspects of experience are idealized, that is, taken up into consciousness as permanent ideas and attitudes. And it is obvious that in the case of the community these ideal embodiments of life's meanings and values must be socialized. They must be available to the community in its corporate capacities; they must become permanent and effective parts of the social consciousness. To this end, there must be such methods of social control and such devices for social intercommunication as are calculated to create and sustain a social consciousness, a corporate sense of common interests and common values. And as we have had occasion to observe in another connection, this is precisely the significance of the scientific and educational movements of today. We have seen how important these movements have been in socializing men; in creating for them a common life, and in making them conscious of this common life. But science and education are only in their infancy. It is impossible to estimate what they are destined to accomplish in the way of social control. It has been only in the last few years that they have had anything like a free hand and an open field in directing human affairs. Until recently the ideals of education and the methods of science were for the most part academic and devoid of social significance. They were confined almost exclusively to classrooms and laboratories. Whatever they effected in the way of social control accrued to the benefit

of a favored few who happened to be within the radius of their influence. They served to promote a sort of intellectual aristocracy which had its counterpart in certain social arrangements and economic preferments based on class differentiation. The most lamentable result of such an isolation of science and education was that these movements were thereby precluded from fulfilling their true functions as instruments of control. In spite of the institutions of learning that had been founded from time to time through the munificence of philanthropic individuals, ignorance, vice, and misery continued to prevail throughout the land. It was not merely that the majority of the people were prevented by physical circumstances from utilizing instruments of culture; the real difficulty lay in the fact that there was no proper appreciation of the social significance of these instruments. And this difficulty was overcome (in so far as it has been overcome) not so much through the channels of formal education, as through the liberalizing effects of industry and commerce. The inventions of science, furnishing as they did the implements of industry and the instruments of social intercourse, placed men in the midst of an immeasurably more intimate and intricate life than they had known before and, what is of greater moment, made them conscious of their common life thus created and sustained. Growing out of this new social consciousness, this new sense of the intimacy and intricacy of life's relationships, was an intense moral earnestness, an anxiety for the general welfare, a social idealism, that demanded to be informed as to the ways and means of social control. Responding to this demand, science and education have at last come into their own. Everywhere there is a new appreciation of the institutions of culture, a new insight into their real significance and their full possibilities. This is what we mean by the social and scientific point of view. It is the most hopeful sign of the times and is destined to become increasingly effective in defining social ends, in creating social values, and in bringing the community to a full consciousness of these ends and values.

So we insist upon a democratic conception of God, as an instrument of control in religious experience. And we await with confidence the development of a type of imagery and a set of symbols appropriate to such a conception. Furthermore, we believe that many of the aesthetic and emotional values embodied in traditional conceptions of the divine will be carried over and will find suitable vehicles of expressions in the new imagery and symbols.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND SOCIAL CONTROL[1]

It is possible to distinguish at least two aspects of religion. In the first place, there are the immediate appreciative experiences which constitute direct and first-hand contact with the divine. From this point of view religion is a mode of experiencing which exists in its own right. It is controlled by a type of interest as definite and as engaging as that controlling any other of the outstanding pursuits of human life, however complex it may prove to be. Like other human interests it has its roots in certain instinctive needs and desires. Its affective quality is a feeling of worth or a sense of value. But there is another aspect of religion, namely, the reaction of the immediate appreciative experiences constituting the religionist's sense of the divine upon the other areas of his experience. From this point of view, the function of religion in its relation to social practice in general may be said to be the maintenance of such a direct and vital contact with the divine as to induce the acceptance and practice of the standards of value embodied therein. The specific character of the reaction of religious experience upon other areas of experience in any given period depends upon the character of the values or ideals constituting the divine in that period and at that level of culture. For example, in the Middle Ages religious values were otherworldly, and the appreciation of these values worked itself out in a manner of life that was ascetic and monastic. In striking contrast, the religious values of our modern period have to do with the world that now is; and the reaction of the experience controlled by these values has been in the direction of a practical humanitarianism. The mystic and the saint have been replaced by the reformer and the social worker. And indeed, it must be said that the church is fast losing sight of the devotional or appreciative aspect of its life, and is becoming more and more a center of social service.

Now this tendency on the part of conventional religion to shift its center of gravity to extra-mural activities to the neglect of the appreciative or devotional aspect of its life is regarded by many with entire

[1] The substance of this chapter appeared in an article in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XXIX (October, 1918), under the same title and is reproduced here with the permission of that *Journal*.

satisfaction. To others, however, it has its dubious aspects. It denotes a dearth of religious ideas and ideals. It bespeaks an impoverished type of religious experience. It harks back to an order of religious values belonging to the past. The church's program of social service has back of it the doctrine of the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." This doctrine is not an adequate statement of our present-day religious values. It reflects a social order which we have left behind. It represents the hypostization of conditions of dependence and limitation which we today refuse to recognize as belonging to the nature of things, much less to set up as religious ideals. The time was when it was an adequate statement of important qualities in religious experience. Reference is made to the rise of democracy in the eighteenth century. We have seen in the preceding chapter that the conception of God as Father, announced by Jesus nearly two thousand years before, only came into its own with the development of democratic sentiments and institutions in Western Europe. But we have seen that the democratic ideals on which the eighteenth-century democracy rested had their roots in a wholly undemocratic conception of man's nature. The rights of man were given; they were donations to man from an inherent and inalienable humanity. Metaphysically speaking, man was as dependent as ever. And however adequate the ideas embodied in the traditional conception of God the Father were for a religious experience having such a social context, these ideas are not entirely adequate for the religious of today. The social context in which religion now functions gives promise of a new type of social organization, a new democracy which, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter, must have a profound influence on our future conceptions of the divine, so much so that the God of the future will be a "democratic God."

Now the function of religion with reference to the democratic God must be obvious. The empirical and practical values constituting the divine as it exists today must, in the first place, become the actual sources of religious satisfaction; and in thus serving the ends of religious aspiration and worship they will in turn become the instruments of moral control. But it must be just as obvious that conventional religion is not prepared to function adequately in either of these directions. Its channels of approach to God, its means of contact with the divine, too often turn out to be but blind alleys, ending in disillusionment. Its forms of worship, its technique of praise and prayer, do not appeal to many, at least, of the most sincerely disposed.

Wrought out with reference to values long since become valueless, they now serve in many cases to obstruct and distort religious experience. The religionist of today asks for bread and is given a stone. He is in search of that which is morally significant and spiritually worth while, and is confronted with much that once had meaning but now is without moral significance or spiritual worth. In the meantime, disillusionment, disappointment, and despair with respect to religious realities are the order of the day.

And this is not all. In thus failing to afford emotional contact with the divine, conventional religion fails also to provide that inner type of moral control which should define its reaction on social practice in general. In consequence of this, resort must be had to various means of external control. Penal systems, eugenics, social service, philanthropy—these are some of the clumsy and ineffectual extremes to which society has been driven in lieu of the inner control that should emanate from a vital appreciation of social values. Of course, it is not to be expected that such inner control shall ever be so thoroughgoing as to require no supplementation by external methods. Doubtless, the poor—and the sick and the sinful and the dependent—we have with us always. But it cannot be determined beforehand what limits there are to a program dedicated to overcoming the prevailing conditions of dependence and limitation. And certainly religion should be satisfied with nothing less than this as an ideal.

But the forms of worship employed by conventional religion not only fail to effect any appreciative contact with contemporary social values with the social control that should follow therefrom; these forms actually serve to inhibit the progressive and constructive tendencies in the experience of the worshiper, and to reinforce the conservative and non-progressive tendencies. And this is not to be wondered at. As has been pointed out, these forms and ceremonies and rituals speak a language that is foreign to present-day experience. They reflect a social system long since left behind. They represent the hypostization of conditions of dependence and limitation which we now refuse to recognize as belonging to the nature of things, much less to set up as religious ideals. They place a premium upon such things as blind credulity, simple childlike faith, abject dependence, and dumb acquiescence. They contemplate a source of good and an order of values whose control is capricious and arbitrary. They presuppose a moral dualism which, if accepted by the worshiper, must disrupt his experience, and make it forever impossible for him to be at one with

himself. Finally, they induce a type of righteousness that is self-complacent and condescending, and whose fruits are the various forms of social service.

The influence of all this on the broad-minded, forward-looking religionist is unmistakable. He is a man of faith, but his faith is active and creative. As a worshiper in the conventional church, however, his faith becomes a matter of "simply trusting, that is all." He has a sense of dependence, knows the joy of companionship, experiences the consolations of prayer. Only, his sense of dependence is a feeling of interdependence, a feeling which is at once the foundation of his moral character and the source of his moral well-being; the joy of companionship is for him a consciousness of contact with a higher and better self, a contact which expands his interests, reinforces his purposes, and sustains his energies; and the consolations of prayer are to him the satisfactions which come to those whose natures it is to reflect, to appreciate, and to be reverent. And yet, as a conventional worshiper, this feeling of interdependence reverts to a sense of a private, personal relationship between himself and another Being. The companionship which he experiences is fraught with a mysticism that is well-nigh uncanny. And the prayers which should console him are for the most part plaintive petitions for miraculous interventions which no one expects to happen.

But the influence of conventional worship on the conservative, non-progressive religionist is just as unmistakable. Here, however, the influence is to be seen in the reaction of religious experience on the other areas of experience. For example, one's pursuit of social or economic ends may be devoid of any regard for considerations of justice or equal opportunity or the right to self-realization. As a conventional worshiper, however, the religionist will be moved to certain acts of social compensation. He will contribute his money, and perhaps his time and influence, to the support of movements designed to overcome, or at least, to mitigate conditions for which his social and economic practices are partly responsible. And it is not that he is a member of a religious organization which accepts his contributions by way of making the best of a bad situation in whose creation it had no part. It is not that the church merely acquiesces in and tacitly approves of "service" and "uplift" and "reform" as forms of social and moral compensation. The fundamental values embodied in the church's conception of the divine, and held out to the religionist as the sources of his emotional satisfacton and the sanctions of his social practice are themselves

feudalistic; they imply a hierarchical structure of reality; they represent conditions of dependence and limitation as belonging to the very nature of things. And appreciative contact with these values actually serves to reinforce a type of social practice that is feudalistic. The churches are full of devout communicants whose methods of conducting their business and whose standards in dealing with their competitors, their employees and the public, are about as far removed from the democratic ideals of justice and equal opportunity and self-realization as could well be imagined. These devout religionists are not necessarily hypocrites. They are the mainstays of the church. They are devoted to the church's social program. And they are possessed of good consciences, withal. What manner of men are they then? How is one to account for them? One must account for them by saying that they are intellectually and emotionally oblivious to the new order of social values and ideals. And one of the agencies responsible for their moral backwardness is the church, with its inadequate doctrines and out-of-date rituals.

The church must rehabilitate the devotional or appreciative side of its life. It must not content itself with being a center of social service. Its true end is to be a source of emotional satisfaction and moral inspiration. It must set for itself the task of creating a new type of religious experience. It must concern itself with inducing the acceptance and practice of standards of value which will reduce its erstwhile efforts at service and uplift and reform to a desperate last resort. To this end, it must revise its creeds and rituals. A new set of symbols and a new type of imagery must be forthcoming. New bottles must be provided for the new wine.